



A View of Life in

The New El Salvador

SOLIDARITY PUBLICATIONS is a non-profit organization that has been publishing materials from the revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Central America since 1980. Our aim is to make widely available the thoughts and writings of the Central American people as they struggle to create new and democratic societies.

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The New El Salvador

A Photo-Documentary of the Liberated Zones of Popular Control



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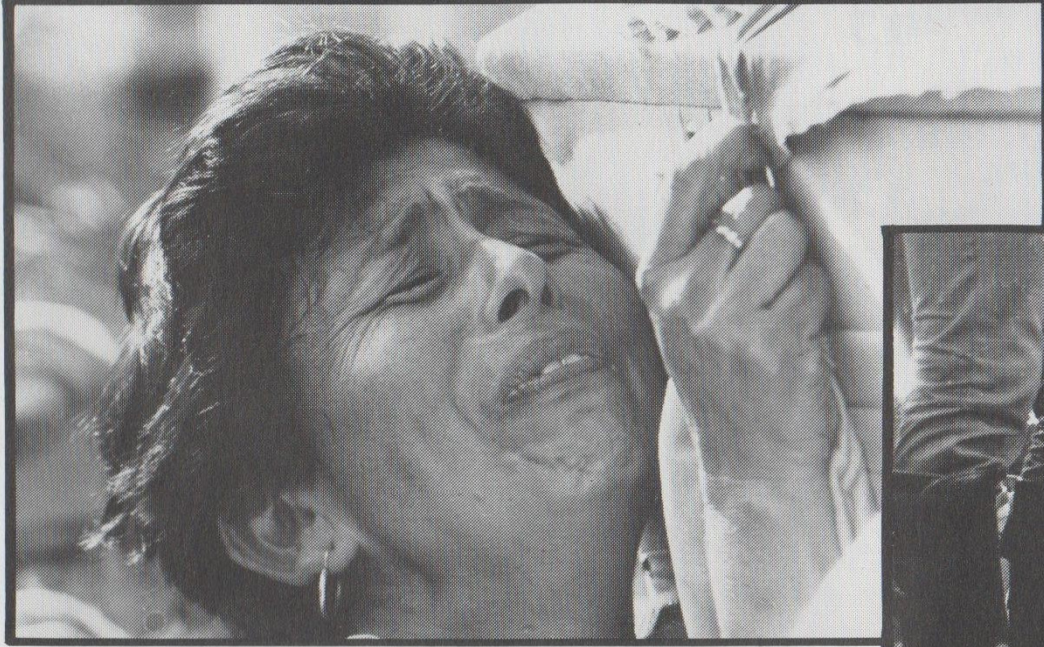


At play in Chalatenango province.

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R. West



Jose Lavanderos

The Other Side of the Story

What is really happening in El Salvador? Is it nothing but war and suffering, or is there another side to the story?

Some of us know of the hunger and repression the Salvadoran people have had to endure as a result of fifty years of military dictatorship. We know of the war, which in the past three years alone has left over 40,000 people dead, the greatest majority of whom were civilians killed by the government.

Some of us may know that in the past three years the Reagan administration has sent successive Salvadoran governments close to \$1 billion in military and economic aid. In an attempt to justify such huge amounts of arms and "aid" the spectre of "the international communist conspiracy" is raised, attempting to turn the war into an East-West confrontation and imaginatively blaming the Soviet Union for the conflict, rather than seeing hunger and misery as the political motivation for this war of liberation.

What many of us don't know and what the administration won't tell us is that the Salvadoran people are in the midst of a profound and irreversible process. They are struggling not simply to defend themselves but to create a new society in which those people previously denied their most

basic rights—food, housing, education and justice—will not only have those rights fulfilled but will live in a society in which human relations can be based on cooperation and equality. Where people's creative potential can be used for the betterment of their country as a whole.

What will this new life be like?

What will this new life be like? Is it possible to begin to create a new society while a war is raging? In the words of the Salvadoran people themselves, The New El Salvador will show the tremendous spirit and potential of a people determined to chart their own destiny.

In these pages we will be able to read about and see the unfolding of that new society and witness how people's lives are changing today. And hopefully from this, more of us will seriously question why the Reagan administration is trying so hard to stop the Salvadoran people from exercising their right to determine their own future.

—ADAM KUFELD
SOLIDARITY PUBLICATIONS

El Salvador

Zones of Popular Control



THIS MAP IS AS OF JANUARY 1983.

The New El Salvador

The Salvadoran people are now engaged in the most important struggle in their history. As a product of the existence of social injustices, of increasingly unequal distribution of wealth, and after having exhausted all peaceful and legal means of achieving social change to benefit the people, the broadest sectors of our country are fighting a war against the traditionally privileged elite. United in the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation and the Democratic Revolutionary Front FMLN-FDR,¹ today our people are confronting their oppressors in every way possible in search of a democratic and egalitarian way of life.

The advances achieved may clearly be seen in different aspects of our struggle. The international political isolation of the Salvadoran government is irreversible and the military successes of the FMLN cannot be hidden. But there are other facets of our struggle which are not widely known.

At present, the democratic and revolutionary

1. The FMLN was formed on October 10, 1980, and is the armed and organized political opposition. The FDR was formed on April 18, 1980, and represents the unity of all El Salvador's opposition labor, peasant, religious, student, small business and political organizations. The FDR carries out the diplomatic work of the revolution.

forces control important parts of the national territory. Approximately 20% of our country (about 1,500 square miles) is now under popular² control and administration. Bordering these regions, zones of changing size can be considered "no man's land," territories in dispute between the revolutionary forces and those of the Salvadoran



Jose Lavanderos

Unity celebration January 22, 1980 which was attacked by government forces, leaving hundreds dead and wounded. This marked the end to open opposition to the Salvadoran government.

2. Although not an exact definition, "popular" in this context means: of the people, by the people and for the people.

government.

Control is exercised by the Salvadoran people in seven zones. Here one finds the principal concentrations of our revolutionary army as well as large civilian populations. These zones of control are:³

1. In the province of Chalatenango, in its north-east region, control is exercised over some 385 square miles, from the border with Honduras in the north, to the base of the Cerron Grande dam in the south. Here in 90 villages, live some 45,000 people, both combatants and non-combatants.

2. In the province of Morazan, in its northern region, control is exercised over some 462 square miles from the Honduran border in the north to the banks of the Torola River in the center of the province. Here, in 82 hamlets, live some 40,000 Salvadorans.

3. In the province of Cuscatlan, around the Guazapa mountains, our people control and administer a territory of approximately 136 square miles in which 35,000 compatriots live.

4. In northern San Vicente, abutting the Pan-American highway and the province of Cabanas, lies a zone of control that covers some 77 square miles in which 20,000 Salvadorans live.

5. In the center of the province of San Vicente, and part of the province of La Paz, around the

Chinchontepeq volcano, popular control extends over some 173 square miles with a population of 30,000 people.

6. In the west of Usulután, along the Lempa River, including the coast, our people through their organizations control some 115 square miles inhabited by 30,000 Salvadorans.

7. In the provinces of Usulután and San Miguel, another coastal zone, popular control is exercised over 46 square miles, with a population, of 12,000 people.

In all, more than 200,000 Salvadorans now live in areas under popular control.

In the zones of popular control it is through the Local Popular Governments⁴ that the Salvadoran people experience what it is like to be masters of their own destinies; where they learn to govern themselves, where they begin to win freedom and true independence.

This document will discuss the daily life of the civilian population living in the zones of democratic and revolutionary control, of their needs and successes, their spirit and hope, their setbacks and triumphs. We will attempt to show how our people undertake each and every one of the tasks with an unshakeable faith in a promising future, a consciousness of equality and democracy, and a spirit of solidarity which guides the construction of the new society. □

3. These figures are as of September 1982. Since October 1982 the zones of popular control have greatly expanded but there are still no official figures.

4. "Local Popular Government" is a translation of "Poder Popular Local (PPL)" or Local Popular Power. In English we feel that Local Popular Government best describes that which embodies Local Popular Power.



Our people undertake each and every one of the tasks with an unshakeable faith in a promising future.

From the Grassroots

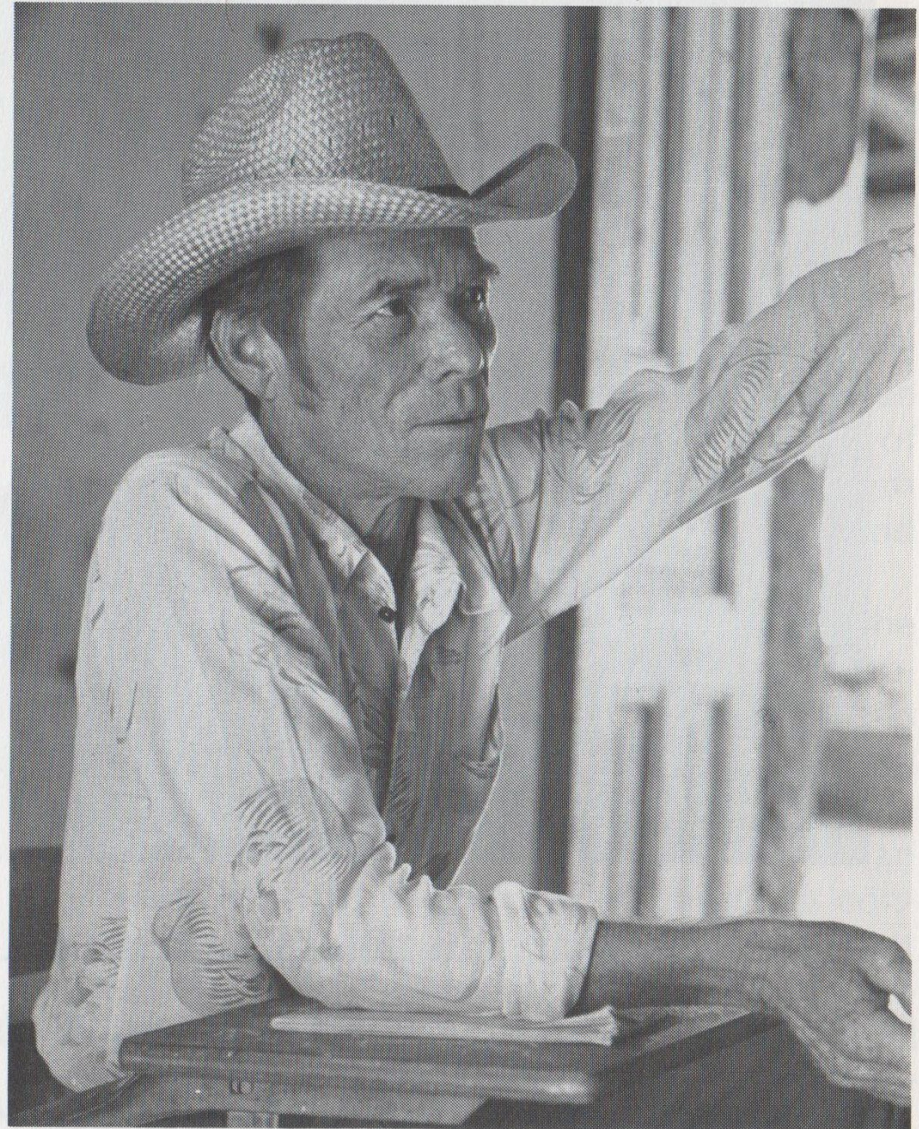
The Local Popular Government is born from the people's need to transform in a revolutionary fashion the old political, administrative and coercive order of the privileged sectors, replacing it with a new type of administrative, political and social organization. This will guarantee that the people's urgent material and social needs are met, and will assure their full participation in the construction of a new type of government.

The creation of the Local Popular Governments provides the conditions under which the people themselves begin to take on the organization of a new social order in their communities.

The Local Popular Governments, closely tied to and supported by the community organizations, incorporate and lead people in different forms of struggle: defense, production, extending zones of revolutionary control, etc.

Local Popular Governments are the seeds of the future organization of the Salvadoran people in a Democratic Revolutionary Government. They are the concrete form in which the people will determine their own destiny under the principles of liberty, justice, the subordination of individual to

collective interest, and the substitution of the spirit of competition with that of solidarity. They are the collective authority elected by the community; in short, the Local Popular Governments are organizations of a people in arms ready to assume their right of self-determination.



Nickelsberg

Participation is the basis for self-determination.

Given the U.S.-guided Salvadoran Government's counterinsurgency strategy of isolating the people from the revolutionary forces by depopulating the zones of revolutionary control and the surrounding communities, we must respond with a policy in which the people, from the grassroots, anchor themselves to the area where they were born and raised, freeing it at any cost and holding it for future generations. This is a basic element of the Local Popular Governments. □

*The people, from the grassroots,
anchor themselves to the area
where they were born and
raised, freeing it at any cost*

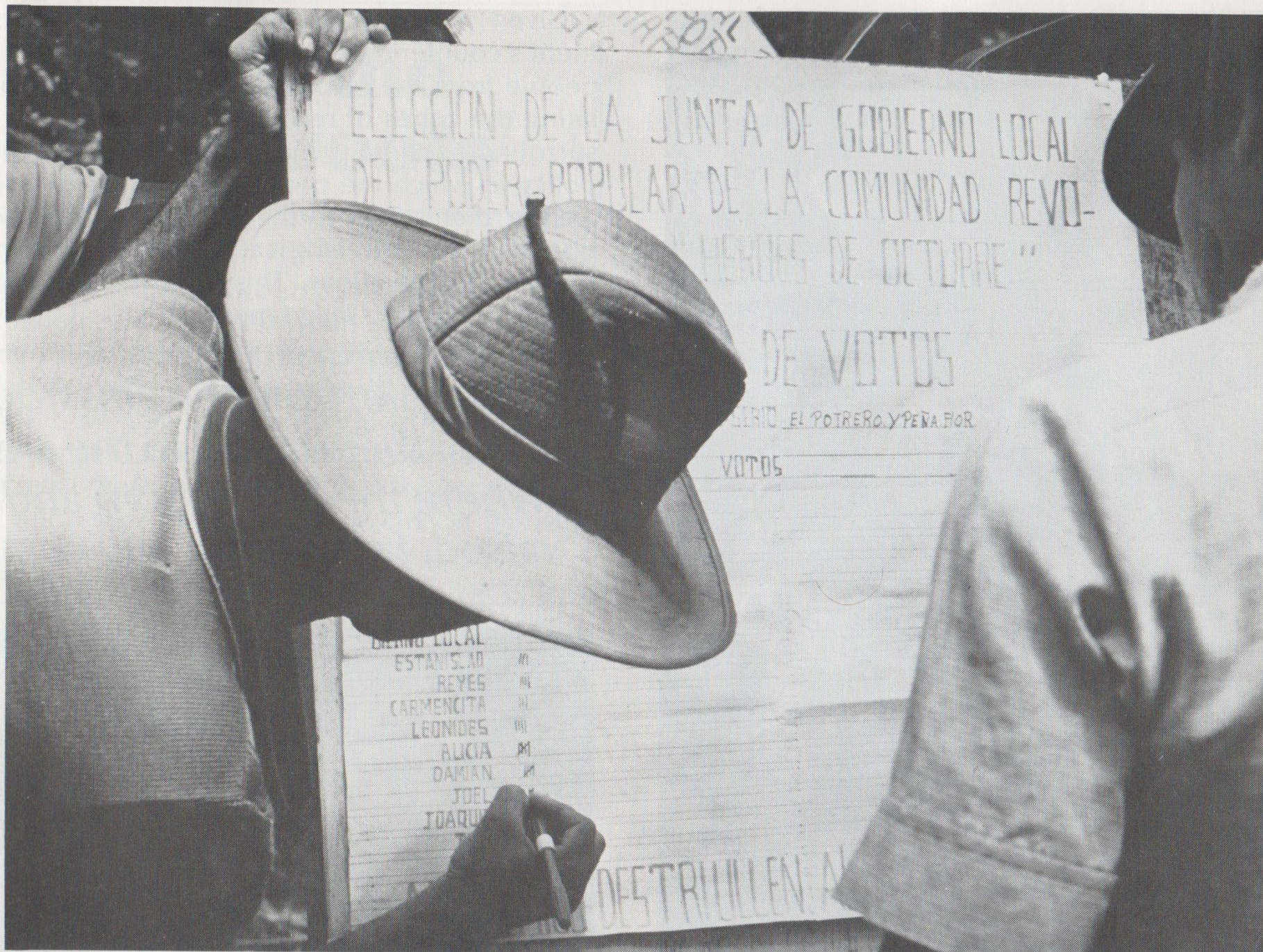


Training militia members for self-defense.



John Hoagland

Forceably moving the civilian population. The Vietnamization of El Salvador.



Local Popular Governments represent the exercise of revolutionary democracy and self-determination.

Democracy in Action

The Community Assembly

The basic structure of organization in the zones of control is the Popular Community Assembly, in which an area's entire population participates and which elects the Directorate of the Local Popular Government.

A Directorate of the group is elected by all the families, maintaining a structure of four, five, or six *compañeros*,⁵ depending on the development of activities in production, education, health, etc.

The elections take place in the Popular Community Assembly and are led by *compañeros* who have shown the most initiative and commitment. The community nominates those considered best able to assume the responsibilities. Several candidates are proposed and the Assembly elects those who will join the Directorate. Generally, the *compañeros* proposed but not elected are regarded as substitutes.

5. *Compañero* is the Spanish word for a person who is working together with others towards the same or similar goals. In this paper we are using it to mean both men and women.

The local Directorate of a Local Popular Government is generally formed by:

- a President
- a Secretary of Production
- a Secretary of Legal Affairs
- a Secretary of Social Affairs
- a Secretary of Communication and Mobilization
- a Secretary of Security and Self-Defense (this person is usually designated by the local military command)

This is not a rigid formula. Other duties and functions can be created if the community considers it necessary.

Members of the Directorate carry out the following tasks:

The **President**, as the highest authority in terms of local administration, oversees the functioning of the Directorate and the execution of tasks and represents the community in activities.

The **Secretary of Production** promotes collective organization of production, distributes land for sowing, oversees the harvest, the establishment of warehouses, etc.

The **Secretary of Legal Affairs** is in charge of knowing about and resolving all problems of a legal nature—marriage, lawsuits, complaints, etc.

The **Secretary of Social Affairs** insures the improvement of material and spiritual living conditions of the population, of paths and roads, purification of water sources, health and hygiene, literacy, and



A local warehouse for corn and beans.

cultural events (political-cultural gatherings, murals, film tours).

The **Secretary of Communication and Mobilization** insures a permanent and systematic diffusion of revolutionary values, principles and guidelines throughout the community, promotes the construction of mass communications media such as radio, revolutionary films, and alternative education.

The **Secretary of Security and Self-Defense** organizes the population to confront the Salvadoran Government's counterinsurgency "clean-up" operations, promotes participation of the community in preparing the terrain for combat, directs participation in combat activities together with the militias and

the Popular Armed Forces of Liberation (FAPL), and reinforces the defense of the population.

The Popular Community Assemblies meet every eight days to discuss all the community's problems, propose work, and divide up the tasks. Meetings for information and coordination between the various Directorates in a zone occur monthly. The presidents of each directorate attend to analyze the general needs of the zone, the problems which are present and ways to solve them; tasks are distributed to the directorates and their communities when required, and the work of production, distribution, etc., is coordinated.

Meetings of the Local Popular Government structure at the national level have also taken place, but due to the conditions of war these have not been regularly scheduled.

The Directorate can build support teams to help carry out its tasks. All decisions are made at the level of the Popular Community Assembly. The Directorate is in charge of controlling and promoting the fulfillment of decisions that are made there. Local Popular Governments represent the exercise of revolutionary democracy and self-determination.

In the FMLN zones of control, there are serious concerns and needs. Children, women, men, the elderly, and combatants need food, medical attention, education, and they need to defend their community. This is where the Local Popular Government comes in. In the following pages we will discuss these areas. □

*“CHILDREN, WOMEN, MEN, THE ELDERLY
AND COMBATANTS NEED FOOD, MEDICAL ATTENTION,*



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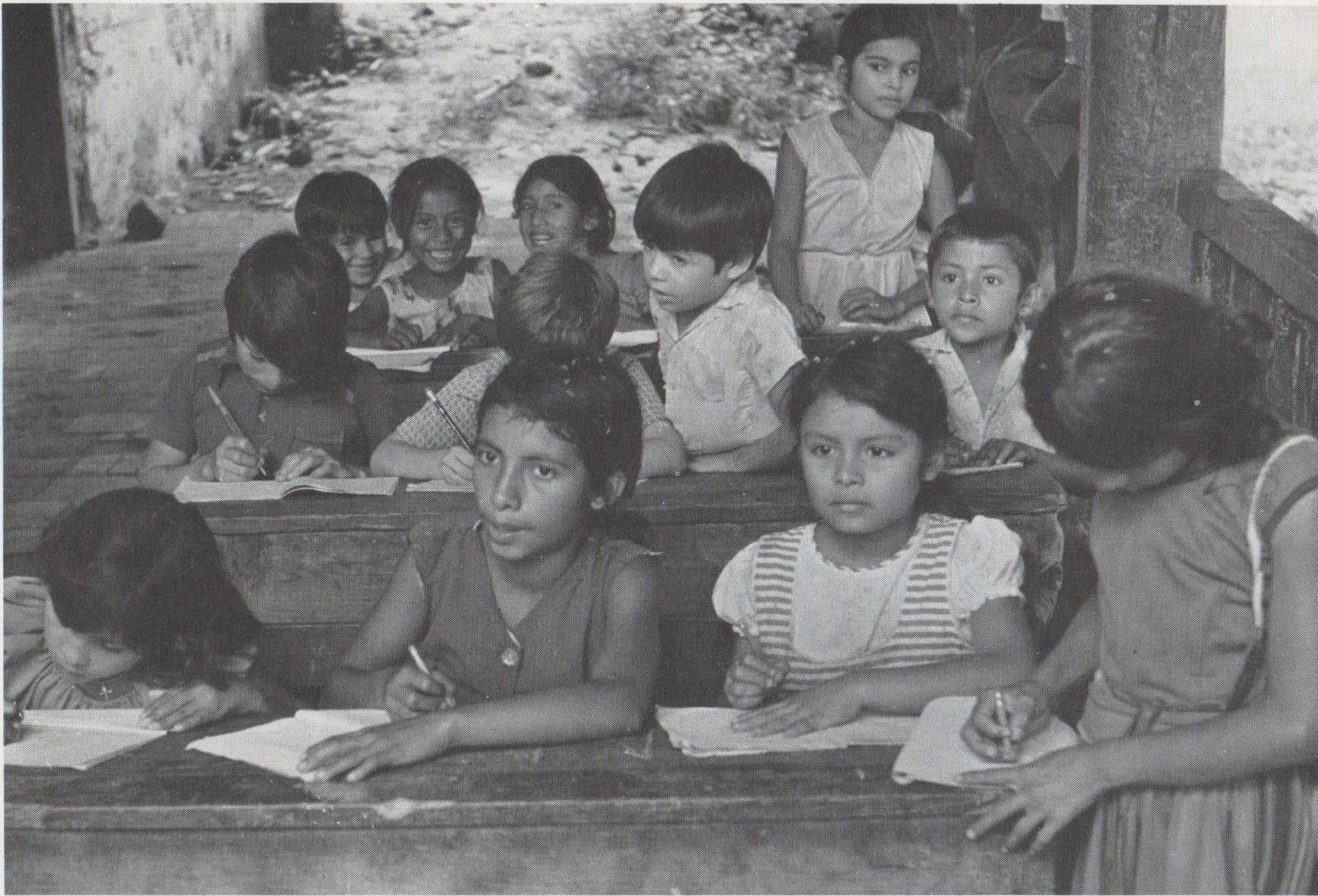


ICSR



COMIN

. . . AND THEY NEED TO DEFEND THEIR COMMUNITY.”



ICSR

*An education embodying new values of
fraternity, love and respect . . .*

Education

While the Salvadoran government closes hundreds of schools, the Local Popular Governments promote the creation of new schools in the zones of control. Closely tied to Salvadoran reality, they have begun an integral form of education which seeks to shape the new man and new woman already beginning to emerge. The construction of Local Popular Governments allows the people to pursue an education embodying new values of fraternity, love and respect which are forged in the revolutionary struggle.

The person in charge of education is generally an outstanding teacher. S/he is responsible for singling out the adults in the zone who, in some form or another have learned their first lessons. The teacher then encourages them to become "people's teachers" and trains them for educational duties. There is a great willingness among peasants who have learned to read, and they make excellent teachers. Whenever anyone knows more than the next person, it is shared, however little it is. At the same time each learns from what the others know. Education is not seen as a one-way process, teacher to student, but rather as a reciprocal process. All are students and all are teachers.

Education in the zones of control is not simply a matter of exact sciences. People are taught to live under conditions of war and to understand them. Children and adults learn what the causes of the situation in which they live are, and how to liberate themselves from the chains of hundreds of years of cruel exploitation.

Children are taught how to interpret life with a revolutionary vision, collective habits are encouraged, as are the principles of equality and justice which must govern their lives. Plans are made in school for their participation in tasks of production, harvest, self-defense, engineering, carrying mail, etc., which they carry out with a



Helping out in a shoe workshop.

ICSR

responsible spirit. For them the best school is life itself and from this they learn of the struggle which has been undertaken and the role that each must play. They learn to read and write utilizing the resources and the reality which surrounds them, relating their studies to concrete things in their everyday life. As paper and pens are not always available, nor are chalkboards, a small stick and the dirt substitutes.

In music class revolutionary songs are sung and the children themselves create new ones using their spark of youthful genius. The children attend classes in the mornings, and in the afternoons they

do the chores the revolution demands.

In the course of their scholastic activities the duties of security, discipline, and self-defense are delegated among the students. These children are alert for any enemy attacks and are in charge of leading their little *compañeritos* to the air raid shelters. This job rotates so that each has the ability to assume this responsibility.

The literacy brigades have launched intensive and permanent campaigns for all the adults who cannot read or write. They also instruct them in other subjects such as history, mathematics,



One of the many bomb shelters used to protect the population against raids from U.S.-supplied A-37 bombers.

Collective habits are encouraged, as are the principles of equality and justice which must govern their lives.

biology, etc., according to their particular abilities and the needs of the revolutionary process in general. The classes go from 6 p.m. to nightfall each evening (as the supply of candles permits). Women leave their children with others and enthusiastically attend. The adults understand the importance of education for their participation in the struggle and for the future reconstruction. This has awakened a great thirst for knowledge in them, which enables them to grasp their lessons readily. They learn easily in spite of the difficulties due to the lack of lights, materials, and, above all, the enemy invasions which at times have forced the

suspension of the established routine for several days.

The academic is combined with the human and political, formal and informal education are closely related. Political education is achieved by means of dialogue about current events, songs, etc. There are also talks on revolutionary values such as love for the people, the importance of collective work, and recognition and respect for the heroes and martyrs fallen in the struggle. □

Education is not seen as a one-way process, teacher to student, but rather as a reciprocal process. All are students and all are teachers.



For the majority of the children of El Salvador these schools are the first they have ever attended.

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Culture

Culture, expressing the people's resistance throughout the war of liberation, is also developed. One of the activities promoted in this vein is the theatrical production. The people choose the themes, ranging from the political, such as the importance of different types of work, the treatment of war prisoners, and the role of women in the revolution; to the educational, such as public health or the treatment of children; and the ideological, such as combat morale, relations among *compañeros*, etc.

The content and development of the themes is elaborated by the people who then present the script to the teacher. Together they discuss it and



Watching a play in the province of Morazan.



correct details if needed. Both children and adults participate in the plays. They are shown in schools, villages, and guerrilla camps. Most contain a comic touch, thus contributing to entertainment as well as education. At the end of the play there is a discussion in which the spectators' opinions are solicited and a thorough explanation of the message is given.

This is complemented by other political-cultural activities. The guerrillas and the people participate in celebrations of the anniversaries of the mass and political-military organizations, and of heroic feats and memorable victories. When the combatants return from a successful operation, festivals are held in which the people dance and sing songs which they have composed to the accompaniment of guitars, the instrument "par excellence" of the Salvadoran people. □

Production

Today, with the growing development of the war, the people are winning back their lands taken from them over generations and are extending and consolidating the zones now controlled by the FMLN. The people who are organized in the Local Popular Governments have broken with the old structures of exploitation, developing new forms of production on their own lands and for their own benefit.

Due to the needs of the popular war of liberation, men, women and children join production duties in great numbers in order to strengthen the economy in the zones of control. In this way they achieve better living conditions and insure adequate basic nutrition for the people and their armed forces.

Throughout the territory, even in the face of bombing raids and Salvadoran army aggression, large zones controlled by the revolutionary movement have been plowed and sown to grow corn, beans, rice, maize, herbs, and other products making up the daily diet.

Agricultural work collectives are organized inside the structures of the Local Popular Governments. Their members are in charge of particular jobs: planting, harvesting, sorting and distribution. Besides collective agricultural work, some

peasants cultivate their individual plots of land.

The Local Popular Governments promote and direct production activities in all FMLN fronts. The collectives draw up their work plans according to the needs of the population and the revolutionary army as well as the potential of the region. These plans include the recovery of insecticides, farming tools, even tractors and other machines necessary to improve productivity.

The objective is to develop production as much as possible so that the Popular Armed Forces of Liberation, born of and sustained by the people, can defend their fundamental interests. Therefore 30% of the harvest goes to the combatants, 50% is for the civilian population, and 20% is saved up in reserve.



Sorting beans.



ICSR

*The people are winning back their lands
taken from them over generations.*

One of the fundamental elements in developing the war is insuring a supply of food. Conscious of the importance of this, the Salvadoran Armed Forces include in their objectives the destruction of machinery and produce in order to weaken the subsistence base of the revolutionary movement. As a response to this, the collectives cultivate small and dispersed plots which the government has difficulty in detecting. We also give great importance to the production of root crops that cannot be destroyed by bombs.

The Local Popular Governments have been able to promote livestock raising in the zones of control. Livestock used to belong to the landholders, and workers were not able to nourish themselves with milk or meat. Due to the intensification of the war, many of the ranchers abandoned their properties, which are today in the hands of the people. The collectives, together with the people's militias, are now in charge of caring for livestock raising as well. They organize the production of cheese, cream and butter.

Cooperative ventures are coordinated among the different zones. An attempt is made to cover all the basic food needs with resources from the same region, but portions of production are sent to other zones which, due to inherent conditions in the region, do not have access to particular products; thus milk or meat is exchanged for fish.

The Local Popular Governments have promoted the distribution of products via people's stores, where fruits, cakes, *quesadillas* (a cheese cornbread), *pupusas* (meat or cheese filled tortillas), coffee, honey, *chilates* (sweetened yams), brown sugar, candles, and soap are available.

Workshops are another form of collective work within the area of production. There is a broad network of sewing workshops in charge of manufacturing uniforms and mending used clothing. The sewing machines are collective property, their original owners having put them at the disposal of these collectives. Workshops for shoes, pots, pans, earthenware and rubber products, etc. have also been formed.

Homemade weapons play an important role in the development of the war, despite the high level



Milking cows under the protection of the Local Militia.

of weapons recovered from the Salvadoran government by the FMLN. The Salvadoran people do not receive military assistance from an outside country as the Salvadoran Armed Forces do from the U.S. Government. However, they have the power of their imagination, and each day contribute new ideas and methods with which to fight the enemy. In the weapons workshop people work intensively, metal is cut and birdshot is laid in the base of what will become a potent mine. Grenades of different types are also manufactured. Home-made weaponry can be effective enough to destroy an armored vehicle; its place of manufacture does not necessarily determine its potency. □

The Salvadoran Armed Forces include in their objectives the destruction of machinery and produce in order to weaken the subsistence base of the revolutionary movement.



Land mines are made to protect the community from government invasions.



A Report on a Fishing Collective

A Very Short Story

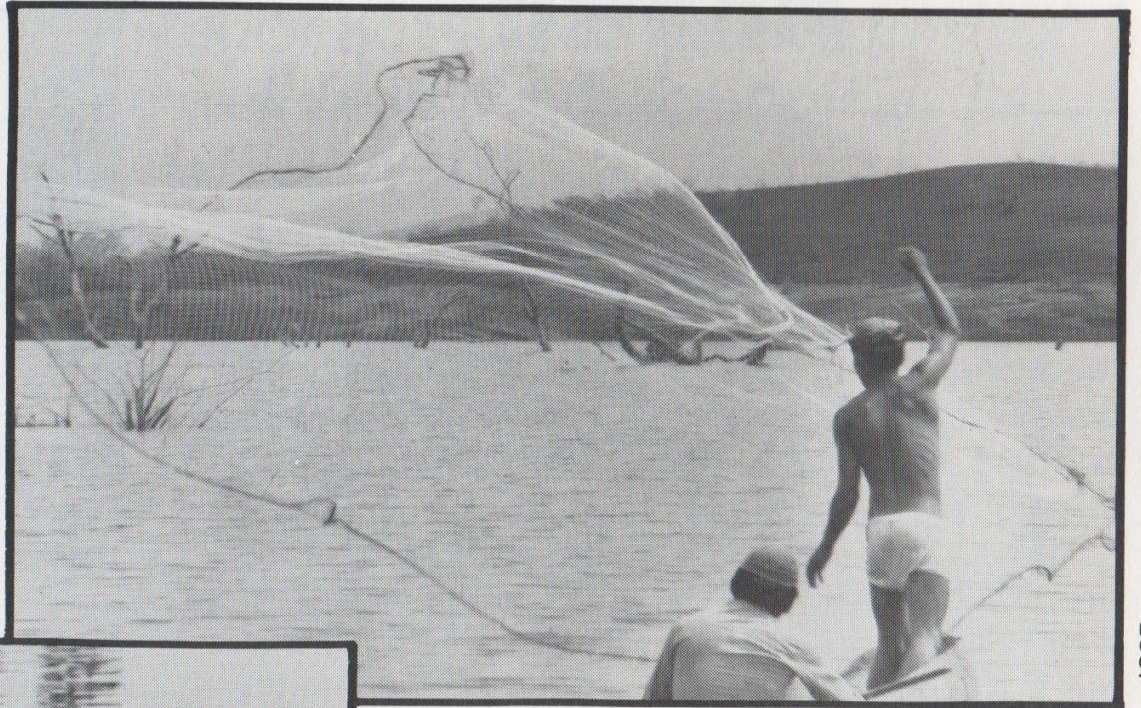
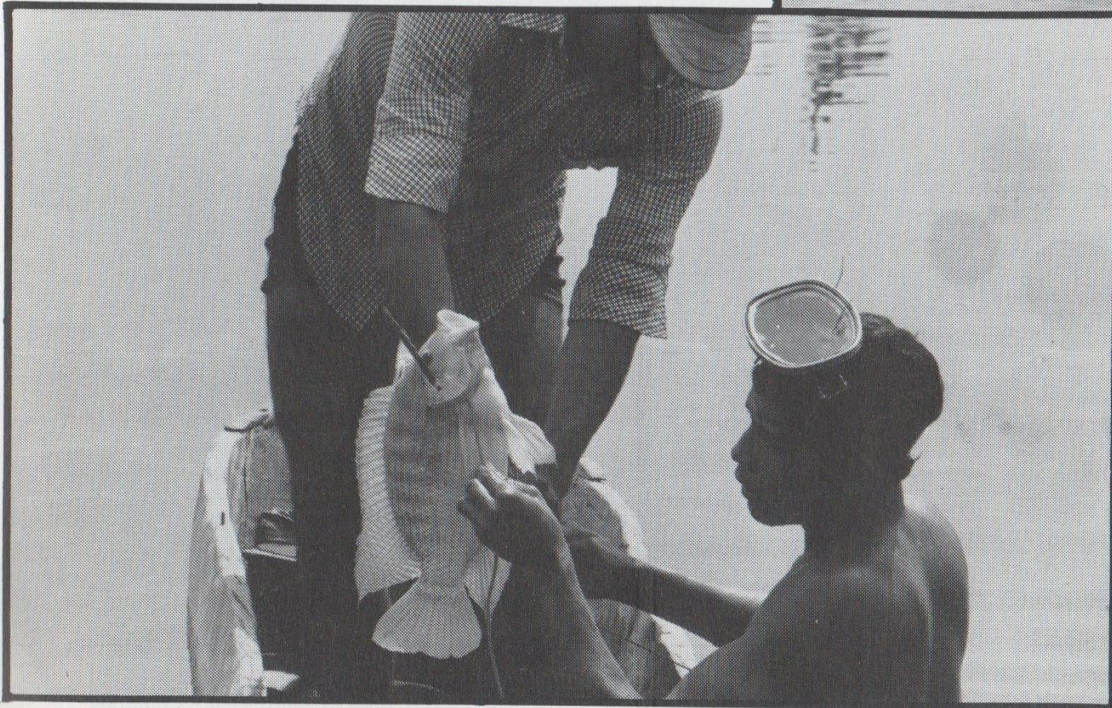
The darkness was broken by a broad ray of moonlight, gleaming on the waters of the Sumpul River. We moved stealthily, trying to avoid any noise in the water. Suddenly Napoleon made a sign that paralyzed our movement and our breath . . . Napo expertly extended his arm to one side and then hurled a great net that seemed to light up in its short flight toward the water. As he hauled it out, over a dozen fish were trying to wiggle free from the cords.

"Which of you wants to try his luck with the net?" Napo asked us, emptying it. Napoleon is head of the fishing collective located on the banks of the Sumpul River, mute witness to thousands of assassinations, but also the scene of incomparable heroism throughout the course of the war of liberation. Every night after darkness falls completely, canoes begin to glide out onto the waters of the Sumpul, searching for schools of fish. "We've eaten fish this

big," says Napo, extending his arms. Every day the fish are shipped to one of the camps to feed our combatants and people, although the hospitals have priority.

The fishing collective has become an indispensable stop for those who pass through the region. Its two houses are resting sites for some combatants, who can fish and swim freely.

The FMLN plans to multiply the fishing collectives, taking maximum advantage of the potential of the rivers in the zones of control. □



Health

In El Salvador, the successive military regimes that have governed the country have never given health its due importance. The Salvadoran health system is not governed by ethical principles of medicine, nor attempts to solve the sanitation needs of the majority of the population. On the contrary, medicine has profit laws as its fundamental principle.

The FMLN, struggling for a new society, has promoted a form of social organization having the well-being of the people as its fundamental principle. The Local Popular Governments promote the creation of hospitals and health clinics. In hospitals which serve several camps of the Popular Liberation Army, we are capable of treating serious health problems. In the war front's general hospital, the most seriously sick and wounded are treated. Major surgery can be performed in both of these types of hospitals.

In each Popular Liberation Army camp there is a medical person in charge of health and medical attention. The *compañeros* who work in healthcare are mostly from worker or peasant origins, and have been trained in the field as surgical assistants, nurses and paramedics, in conjunction with physicians who have joined the war and renounced the privileged place they held in society.



Removing shrapnel.

The FMLN, struggling for a new society, has promoted a form of social organization having the well-being of the people as its fundamental principle.



In the zones of control there is only a limited quantity of medicines. For this reason, one of the main tasks for the Local Popular Governments is preventive medicine. The Local Popular Government health leader and the medical workers of the revolutionary army are in charge of giving the people guidelines on health, through mini-courses and publications. Children as well as adults learn basic concepts of environmental and personal hygiene, how to construct latrines, protect food from flies, to eat as healthily as possible, etc.

Health collectives are constituted in the different communities, and their services are organized at three levels: (a) first aid, which is given by the sanitation teams; (b) when a case is grave a doctor is called; and (c) when there is a need to operate, to make a cast, etc., one visits a hospital.

It is interesting that despite the hardships, the FMLN and the Local Popular Governments have managed to develop preventive medicine to a great extent, especially relying upon natural resources. Production of homemade medicines has begun, as

One of the main tasks for the Local Popular Governments is preventive medicine.

Organized in the zones of control are brigades of medical and paramedical personnel working in local hospitals and clinics. Each brigade is put together by the Doctor's Council which consists of one doctor, one anesthetist, and a sanitation and prevention team. These are in charge of instructing *brigadistas* in the practice of first aid, in caring for the sick and wounded, and in teaching some skills for minor surgery.

The sanitation and preventive medicine teams are in charge of giving courses in preventive medicine, nourishment, and personal hygiene, as well as sex education. At the insistence of these teams the production of olive soap has begun, and the inhabitants of the zones bathe daily.

part of a medical policy being promoted in all the war fronts.

The production of medicines extracted from roots and plants is very important. Medicines for illnesses such as diarrhea, stomach pains, and respiratory infections have already been manufactured. The outlook for the development of these methods is very promising. In a short time, home-made medicine could substitute for up to 60% of laboratory medicine used in revolutionary health.

The effectiveness of these medicines in curing the most common illnesses is undeniable, and the lack of confidence in them, evident at the start, has been erased by practice. Today one can see both

combatants and the civilian population receive and take their homemade medicines with the same confidence they used to take tablets or capsules. The knowledge of the local peasants regarding the healing properties of plants, a vestige of indigenous traditions which are retained even today, is taken advantage of in the manufacture of homemade medicines.

In summary, health work is practiced in three areas: curative medicine; preventive medicine, which when possible promotes vaccination campaigns (plans are underway for a vitamin campaign); and environmental sanitation, that deals with problems like contaminated wells (which are a result of bombing raids that leave dead animals on the banks of rivers), garbage disposal, rodent control, etc. There is an attempt to develop these three areas evenly, but this has not been possible due to the lack of material resources on the one hand and the constant military invasions on the other.

In the seven zones of control, advances have been made in each of these areas, but these advances are still uneven and tremendously insufficient. For this reason their improvement has become a priority.

By way of anecdote, a doctor from a camp in the Central Front reports that one of the most difficult operations he has performed was on an enemy soldier with a bullet wound which had punctured his lung. Miraculously he was saved—and now he has joined our revolutionary army. □

“The Important Thing is Creativity”

Interview With Compañero Vicente

A correspondent from Radio Farabundo Martí, sent to report on the advance and development of the Local Popular Governments recently interviewed *compañero* Vicente, head of security and self-defense in one of the Local Popular Governments.

Q: Compañero Vicente, we are here in a zone which already seems quite organized. Can you explain how the Local Popular Government maintains control here?

A: Besides the Local Popular Government, the local guerrillas and the militias are also in charge of security and protection of the population in our zone of control. The guerrillas patrol wherever enemy troops might penetrate. The militias, together with those of us in charge of security stay in a state of alert—we note anything strange in order to alert the guerrillas. We have an alarm system, like bombs, which we explode when the enemy



The joy of defending her people.

comes. We have alarm-traps, which are cans tied with whistles or oil cans, anything people find. At night the enemy travels without lights, trips on the can, and it makes a noise; this way we can detect them.

We also lay other traps. First we check out the land, and then go out together with the local people because they also have to know where the traps are laid. The type we use most are pits with sharpened stakes at the bottom, ditches, barricades, and "caza-bobos" (literally: dummy-catchers). The "caza-bobo" is a mixture of cement and explosives. If there is no cement, the children put together a mixture of iron, nails, and sticks. They make a hole under a rock and put the mixture in, then put the rock back over it on the road where the government forces will pass. When the enemy steps on the rock, two wires are connected and the whole thing explodes. It's quite a strong explosion.

Sometimes we make scarecrows with wooden guns. We hide them behind a tree with the chest peeking out, so that when the enemy comes through the zone he sees the figure, is surprised and shoots.

The important thing here is creativity. The people have many ideas. When somebody gets an idea, they write it down and then in the next meeting we discuss it and in this way we come up with new traps and new homemade weapons.

Sometimes when the enemy drops bombs on us, some do not explode. We have to be watchful of this, in order to warn the guerrillas and thus

recover more war material.

Q: Compañero, one of the characteristics of the Local Popular Governments is to make the community participate in the war in an offensive capacity. How do the people in your community do this?

A: Here in the zones of control, everything is planned. There are several groups in the community, and each has tasks to carry out. There are

We know that a lot of sacrifice is necessary in order to win this war and be truly free.

groups of *macheteros*⁶ in charge of opening new roads in case there has to be a retreat or to evacuate the population. There is a group of *honderos* (literally: slingshooters) who besiege the enemy with slingshots. Other groups use bows and arrows. Even children of twelve already participate in these groups. For example, if there is to be an attack on a military post, the high command asks the militias and the Local Popular Government to maintain control and to hold the siege. So the guerrillas go in one day with harassment tactics, and the next day some community members go with the militias to make noise with megaphones and tin cans—at midnight you suddenly hear a series of shouts: “Down with the tyranny! Give up, the guerrillas are coming.” And so the soldiers get nervous and can’t sleep all night, so that the next

6. Literally: those who use machetes.



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An unexploded U.S.-supplied 250 lb. bomb.

day they don't have the energy to fight. In these attacks, the people of the community also make barricades, sabotage roads and power lines, etc.

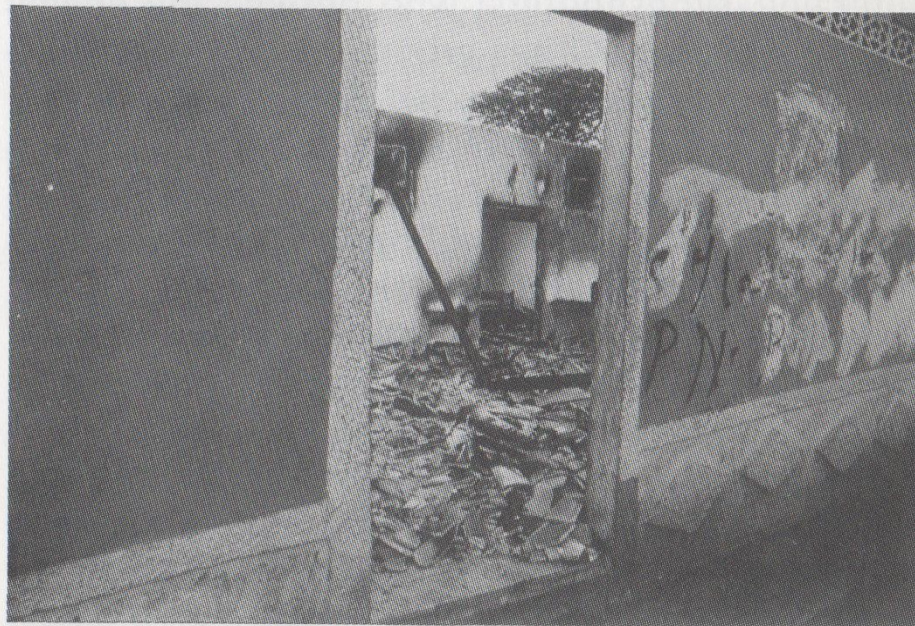
Q: Compañero, I understand that keeping the population supplied with food and other materials is not always easy. How do the Local Popular Governments resolve this problem?

A: The problem of production and supplies is certainly not always easy to resolve. Generally, what we have is what the collectives plant and what we recover from the enemy. We plant together and share everything among everyone. We have a warehouse where we store things. The head of the warehouse distributes the food with the written authorization of the Local Popular Government: part goes to the guerrillas, part to the population, and part to the high command. The guerrillas also help in production. For example, the chief of the camp decided that this week they would work three days in production, cleaning beans.

Distribution is done according to need. Everything belongs to the people and is administered by the head of the Local Popular Government. We don't say "this belongs to the civilians," "this belongs to the guerrillas"; no, everything belongs to everyone! If we are without food in the Local Popular Government, everyone goes hungry; if there is a little, everyone eats a little. Sometimes there is no sugar, no salt, but the people understand and no one complains, no one blames anyone. We know that a lot of sacrifice is necessary in order to win this war and be truly free. □

Defense

At this time of war in El Salvador, the fundamental objective of the regime and of U.S. policy is to annihilate the revolutionary movement. However, in spite of constant offensives by the Salvadoran armed forces, the revolutionary movement continues to consolidate its territories. Territorial defense then becomes the most important area in the development of Local Popular Governments. They must not only defend the community, but also participate in and contribute to the development of the war. All its activities are carried out in close coordination with the militias and the local guerrillas.



The aftermath of a bombing raid.

The defense of the territory consists of observing all movements inside the zone; controlling entries and exits of people in order to detect enemy infiltration; and the observation of barracks, command posts and all activities of the governmental, paramilitary forces and death squads.

To protect the population from the indiscriminate bombing raids carried out by the regime, the Local Popular Governments organize the construction of bomb shelters, called *tatus*.

The Local Popular Governments also organize the community in combative activities of an offensive nature. The Salvadoran people have learned a great deal from other people's experiences, which



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Making the powder for explosives. In a people's war everyone takes part.

showed that with the participation and creativity of an organized people in a people's war it is possible to defeat a powerful enemy. Today, the people who make up the Local Popular Governments demonstrate their enormous creativity in the construction of weapons, traps and barricades as well as in carrying out sabotage, attacks, and recovering weapons and supplies from our enemy.

The organizational advances of the Salvadoran people in the zones of control also facilitate the rapid movement of great numbers of people during large scale attacks by the Salvadoran government's army. People retreat to areas which, due to their inhospitability, have never been settled.



Constructing homemade weapons.

When it is possible, a return is organized to places destroyed by the bombers, without clothes, without food, without medicine, the crops leveled, the animals killed. The Local Popular Government directs the necessary reconstruction and as people return to the lands from which they were massively and brutally expelled they unite their voices in a unanimous declaration that "even with one hut left standing, we will rebuild our life anew."

One more success of Popular Government is that many people who had fled the country seeking refuge in the border area of Honduras have begun to return and to join the work developing in the zones of control and in the defense of the revolution. To this date more than 10,000 people have preferred to return to their land and join the revolutionary movement than to remain in the Honduran refugee camps where they are treated as prisoners. They know that they are safer in the zones of control, for there they can rely on the defense of the combatants, and they will learn to defend themselves, thus defending their rights and their land.

Finally we call upon the international community, especially the North American people, to defend our rights and to make known our victories in the construction of a new society based upon our desire to achieve self-determination, freedom and democracy. We urge you to vigorously protest all attempts by the Reagan Administration to turn back the advances of our people in building this

new society. We also call upon you to economically support our efforts and participate with us in the building of a new El Salvador. □



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To Find Out How You Can Help The Local Popular Governments See Inside Front Cover.



The New El Salvador

What is really happening in El Salvador? Is it nothing but war and suffering, or is there another side to the story? What many of us don't know is that the Salvadoran people are in the midst of a profound and irreversible process. They are struggling not simply to defend themselves, but to create a new society. A society in which human relations can be based on cooperation and equality.

What will this new life be like? Is it possible to begin to create a new society while a war is raging? These and other questions will be answered by the Salvadoran people themselves in *The New El Salvador*.

